

FOREWORD

As a foundation committed to creating opportunity for low-income people and communities, we at The Kresge Foundation are keenly aware of the nature and severity of climate change as well as its disproportionate impact on vulnerable people and communities.

Society must do all that it can to reduce the pollutants that cause climate change so that its effects do not become unmanageable. At the same time, we must prepare for those impacts – such as coastal flooding, severe drought, and extended heat events – that it is too late to prevent.

While climate change is a global problem, its effects are – and increasingly will be – felt locally in communities across the U.S. and the globe. Just as national and state-level action on climate change is required, local governments also have a critical role to play.

Kresge's Environment Program aims to help communities build their resilience in the face of climate change. To build resilience, communities must simultaneously:

- Lessen overall demand for energy and increase the proportion derived from renewable sources;
- Anticipate and prepare for pressures and shocks that climate change will introduce or worsen; and
- Foster social cohesion by strengthening connections among individuals and networks and advancing social inclusion.

In our view, climate-change planning and policies to date have included insufficient analysis of the differential needs and interests of low-income people and communities. Past experience suggests that variables such as income, age, health, and disability status often influence an individual's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from hazardous events. Given this fact, universal climate-resilience goals will not be met without targeted strategies to address the unique circumstances of low-income

communities and vulnerable populations.

We see a need to expand the cohort of individuals and organizations that approach climate-resilience work with a strong grounding in the experiences and interests of low-income communities.

With that thought in mind, in 2013, Kresge partnered with the Movement Strategy Center (MSC), the Emerald Cities Collaborative, and the Praxis Project to launch the Pathways to Resilience Initiative. With leadership from MSC, the partners brought together leading thinkers from across the U.S. to consider the question “*What would a climate-resilience agenda need to include for it to be socially just?*”

We were delighted and encouraged by the commitment and enthusiasm of the initiative partners as well as the many other experts and colleagues who dedicated extensive hours to engage in robust and often-challenging conversations about how to elevate the priorities, interests, and needs of low-income people in climate-resilience activities.

This publication captures insights gained through interviews, commissioned papers, a multiday strategy lab, and post-strategy lab reflections on the part of the initiative partners. The views expressed throughout the publication are those of the respective authors of each section.

We at Kresge are more committed than ever to improving the resilience of low-income, urban communities in the face of climate change. Our hope is that this publication serves as a valuable contribution to the field and that it will influence climate-resilience planning, policy development, and implementation to better reflect the priorities and needs of low-income people in U.S. cities.

*Lois R. DeBacker
Managing Director, Environment Program
The Kresge Foundation*